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FLOWER ARRANGEMENT

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Ernest F. Schaufler

Do you like cut flowers in your home? Some persons think flower arrangement is a mysterious art, but with a little practice you can arrange flowers so they are pleasing and add to the attractiveness of your home.

Don't expect your first attempt to be a masterpiece. Experience is the best teacher; so when you have read the following pages, try an arrangement. After a few trials you will feel you have accomplished much. Soon you will think not only of flowers and foliage (leaves) that look well together, but also of containers and where the arrangement is best placed in the room.

Remember that even one or two blooms with a little foliage make an arrangement. There is no reason to feel that you have nothing to arrange. You can use wild flowers as well as those from your home garden.

Care of Flowers

Your arrangement will last longer if you prepare the flowers for it. This is called *hardening*. Flowers treated this way take up water and do not wilt quickly after they have been arranged. Follow these rules, especially for your entry at a fair exhibit.

1. Cut the flowers in early morning or evening.
2. Cut the flower stems with a sharp knife; make a slanting cut.
3. Remove foliage from the bottom 2 to 3 inches of stem.
4. Put the cut flowers in hot water (110°F.) immediately, so from 5 to 6 inches of the stems are covered. Keep the flower petals dry. Do not crowd too many flowers into one pail or container as petals bruise easily.



Containers from the kitchen cupboard

5. Let the flowers stand in water overnight in a cool room, such as the basement.

Containers

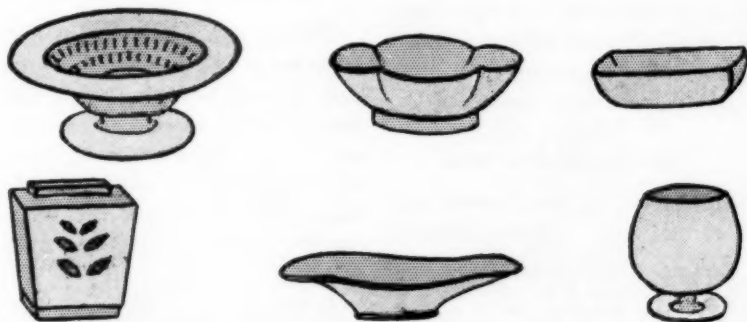
Regardless of what you use for a container, be sure it is **CLEAN**! Make your flower arrangement in anything that will hold water, flowers, and foliage. Low containers are easier to use than are tall, slender ones. It may be a jug, a bowl, a cup, a teapot, or the like. Think of all the containers in your Mother's kitchen cupboards. Do not forget regular containers. How many do you have? Look around and see!

Other good shapes are shown below.

Choose the right container for your flowers, *and* for the place the container is going to occupy, just as you choose the right dress or

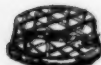
suit for a certain occasion. For example: a tall container on the mantel may hide the picture above it, and a small container might be lost if you have a large mass of flowers. For large, single flowers, choose a container of strong and simple lines. With most flower combinations, it is best to use containers that are neutral in color. Gray and dull green are neutral colors. Dark-colored containers usually show off the flowers to best advantage.

Wash the container thoroughly with soap and water. Wash used flower vases with a strong soap and use a cloth to remove any scum from the inside. Flowers last much longer in a clean container. Change the water every two days so the flowers always have fresh, clean water. This helps to make the flowers last even longer.



Other well-shaped containers

Holdern



Holdern for the Flowern

How are the flowern held in containern? In low containern, the typen shown above, keep the flowern wheren you put them.

Here is a trick of the trade! If you use a needle-point holder and the flowern are too heavy for it, or if the holder move around, fasten the holder to the containern with a thin layer of modeling clay. Be sure both the containern and the holder are dry before you apply clay. Glass-hole holderen are hard to manage.

Stuff tall containern with fern leaveen, pieceen of evergreenen, or twiggen of privet to hold the flowern. These materialen should be inserten small end down. These are most usefule when you have only four or five stemmen for you tall containern. Some personen use glass marbleen, pebbleen, or sand.

Typen of Arrangemenen'

Each typen of arrangemenen has a certain namen, just as different

¹Drawingen are from the American Gardnen Guild, publisher of the "Complete Book of Flowern Arrangemenen" by F. F. Rockwell and Esthern C. Grayson, with drawingen by John Brimer.

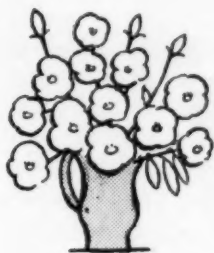
styleen of china have namen. In flowern arrangemenen, there are three basic typen. These are simple and are callen (1) *line*, (2) *mass*, and (3) *massed-line*. Each can be formal or informal. If your arrangemenen is formal, it meanen that one-half, as you're looking at it, is exactly like the other half. Informal arrangemenen are balanceen, but are not similar on both sideen. So you may have a formal or informal *line*, *mass*, or *massed-line* arrangemenen. Exampleen of these three typen are shown on pageen 5 and 6.

A circle with forsythia and daffodiln is illustrateen on page 6. Make one like it in the spring.

The Ruleen and Principleen

You are now ready to plan and make the arrangemenen. So far you have learnen how to harden the flowern, what to put flowern in, how to hold them, and what typen of arrangemenen to work toward. Now, what ruleen and principleen do you follow? Here are four principleen:

1. Design
2. Scale
3. Balance
4. Harmony



Formal,
or
symmetrical

Crescent—informal



Informal,
or
asymmetrical

Triangle—formal



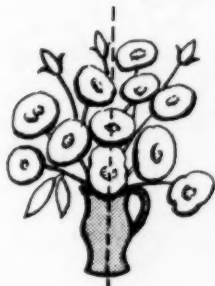
Hogarth
curve—
informal

Horizontal line—formal



Vertical
line—
informal

Mass arrangement



Circle of forsythia and daffodils

Perhaps these are strange words to you, but let's take them one by one.

Design

Design is the thought-out plan as to the form of your arrangement. It depends on your own personal idea of your arrangement. It is planning the flowers, the container, and the leaves to go together. For example: to make a pleasing arrangement, you may have only two large blossoms, a large sugar bowl, and several large leaves. Design is how you put these together to look right.

*Not in scale*

Scale

Scale has to do with the size of the flowers you are using. A small hat is "lost" perched atop a 200-pound woman, and so are petunias "lost" when used with large-flowered dahlias. Tiny blossoms also are "lost" when arranged in a large, plain container. You want the flowers, the foliage, and the container in scale, that is, appropriate in size.

Balance

Balance is placing flowers in the container so they appear stable—not top-heavy or lop-sided.

The arrangement on the left in the illustration on page 7 is top-heavy. The same flowers after they have been shortened and made stable are on the right.

You now have three of the four rules established without too much trouble. The fourth rule is the hardest to explain.

*In scale*

*Top-heavy**Stable*

Harmony

Harmony assures that the arrangement looks well and is pleasing. Look at the arrangement and decide whether all the things you used go well together. Maybe you have looked at a painting or a house and decided it did not harmonize because of an off-color. An elaborate doorway on a small house seems to "offend" because it is not in harmony. Your arrangement may not be in harmony because the color of the container and that of the flowers clash.

Now that you have learned the four principles, try to make an arrangement.

How to Do It

1. Have a picture or plan in mind before you begin. Select one of the drawings and work toward one like it.

2. Select a container that is right for the setting—for example, a low one for the dining-room table. Select flowers that go with the container. Plan to let some foliage come over the edge of the container.

3. Use a holding device. For an upright container, your **tallest stem** should be about $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as tall as the container. For a **low flat container**, keep the stem to $1\frac{1}{2}$ times its length.

4. Use flowers with stems cut at different lengths.

5. Never crowd your flowers; let each blossom show.

6. Use buds, slightly opened flowers, and light colors at the top and outer edges. Place your largest, open, strongest or brightest colored flowers at the center and bottom of your arrangement.

7. Add foliage for interesting line, color, or background.

8. Arrange the flower stems so they seem to spring from a central root. Do not let stems cross—it gives an "X marks the spot" effect.

9. Let one color or center of interest be outstanding. Take heart; you are now a flower arranger, - - - - *almost!*

After you have completed the arrangement, look for its faults. Are the container and flowers alike or pleasingly contrasting in color or shape? Is the scale between flowers and container pleasing? Does the arrangement seem to tip or is it stable? Is one color outstanding? It does take practice to find pleasing combinations.

In Brief

Plan to arrange annuals during the summer. Fall and winter gives you the following materials to work with:

Cockscomb
Statice
Winged Everlasting
Curly-dock weed
Red sumac
Cattails
Dried grasses
Grain stalks

Seed pods make interesting winter materials. What does your garden offer?

Iris seedpods
Poppy heads
Chinese lantern
Tulip-tree seed heads
Honey-locust pods
Milkweed pods
Mullein stalks

Flower arrangement can be a year-round pleasure for you and for others who may enjoy your arrangements. If you remember, **design, scale, balance, and harmony**, every arrangement you attempt should turn out well.

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